

REMARKS

I. Status of the Application

Claims 5 – 33 are presently pending in the application. In the Office Action mailed November 16, 2003, Claims 5, 15 – 19, and 29 – 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mooney et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,885,829) in view of Elia (U.S. Patent Application Ser. No. 10/179,589, Pub. No. 2002/0192198). Claims 6 – 8 and 20 – 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mooney et al. in view of Elia and further in view of Lichkus et al (U.S. Pat. No. 6,488,503). The Applicants thank the Examiner for the allowance of claim 33. The Applicants likewise thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 9 – 14 and 23 – 28 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 34 – 79 have been added and claims 5 – 8, 15 – 22, and 29 – 32 have been canceled without prejudice.

As suggested by the Examiner, claims 9, 12, 13, and 23 have been rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim. Dependent claims have been added to depend from the re-written claims that correspond to claims previously dependent from claims 9, 13, and 23. In addition, dependent claims have been added to depend from allowed claim 33 that correspond to claims 9 – 12 and 14 – 18. No new matter has been added.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 9 – 14, 23 – 28, and 33 – 79.

II. Claims 5, 15 – 19, and 29 – 32 Are Not Obvious Over Mooney et al in View of Elia

At page 2, paragraph 3, claims 5, 15 – 19, and 29 – 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mooney et al. in view of Elia. In light of the cancellation of

these claims without prejudice, the rejections are thereby obviated. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this obviousness rejection.

III. Claims 6 – 8 and 20 – 22 Are Not Obvious Over Mooney et al in view of Elia in Further View of Lichkus et al

On page 3, paragraph 6 of the office action, the Examiner rejected claims 6 – 8 and 20 – 22 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mooney et al in view of Elia and further in view of Lichkus et al. In light of the cancellation of these claims without prejudice, the rejections are thereby obviated. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this obviousness rejection.

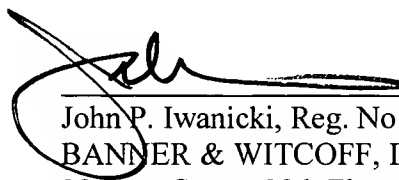
IV. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the pending claims in view of the foregoing remarks. To the extent the Examiner believes that it would facilitate allowance of the case, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the number below.

The Commissioner is authorized to apply any charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 19-0733.

Respectfully submitted,

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